

11th Annual Conference
Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture



A Polyphony of Emotions
Thinking Affect in Heritage, Memory and Material Culture

2, 3, 4 July, 2025
University of Amsterdam

Call for Papers

Cultural heritage shapes individual and collective emotions, and vice versa. The reciprocal relationship between heritage and emotions is demonstrated by how, in recent years, political, activist and academic debates have reconsidered the importance of affect. No longer relegated merely to the individual and psychological dimension, these debates have come to frame emotions as constituent elements of social experience. Suffice it to consider the use of social fear of a global nuclear war; the imperialist nostalgia of Western countries, which see nationalism and/or populism as the solution to counter globalisation; the emotional polarization with the ongoing wars in Palestine and Ukraine; the resurgence of radical ethno-traditionalist rhetoric all around the world, driven by frustration with open-market globalism, and the manipulation of foreign-state propaganda aimed at exploiting emotions to politically target local populations; the pride or vindictive anger of activists who deface museums, works of art and monuments; heightened emotions in the context of social revolutions and political revolts and (neo)colonial struggle, the emotions connected to the memory and impact of the Pan-Atlantic slave trade and all forms of enslavement of people; or the solastalgia and anxiety caused by the ever-faster crisis of climate change.

These few examples indicate the extent to which emotions and thinking affect can become performative forces, driving actions and therefore building, preserving, destroying heritage and

memory. Understanding the role of emotions in heritage sites, memory acts and material culture practices, policies and politics, therefore, is essential to grasp how the past is experienced, contested, romanticized, rejected or silenced across various local, national and transnational levels. In response to the need to better understand these processes, the 11th annual conference of the Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture (AHM) will be dedicated to the polyphonies of emotions and thinking affect in heritage, memory and material culture studies. By crossing academic, artistic and professional boundaries, the aim of the conference is to investigate how the past can be constituted as a battleground where emotions are designed, weaponized and manipulated to advance political and ideological agendas, or to shape the mobilization of communities. This conference aims to explore the dynamic relationship between heritage and collective emotions, focusing on how emotions affect varied global heritage and memory practices, narratives and policies, and, vice versa, how heritage can serve as a tool for emotional mobilization, resilience and reconciliation.

We welcome abstracts and proposals for papers, panels and roundtables emanating from diverse historical and geographical contexts that engage with (but are not restricted to) the following themes:

- Theories of emotions and heritage: what theoretical perspectives can illuminate the relationship between heritage, emotion, and conflict, and how can these frameworks deepen our understanding of the emotional dimensions of heritage?
- Emotions and the politics of heritage and social justice: how do emotions contribute to preserving or challenging dominant and hegemonic heritage narratives? What role do emotions play in (re)shaping research positionalities, resisting cultural and political polarisation or facing systemic oppression and injustice?
- Emotions and heritage construction: how are emotional narratives intentionally constructed in heritage sites, museums, works of literature, films, and commemorations, with the aim of influencing collective memory and identity?
- Emotion and collective memory: how do emotional frameworks shape collective memory and the understanding of the past?
- The weaponization of emotions in conflict: how are emotions strategically manipulated to justify the destruction of cultural heritage or to mobilize communities to defend it?
- Heritage and collective solidarity: in times of crisis, how do communities utilize heritage to foster emotional resilience, solidarity, and a sense of shared purpose?
- Methodologies for studying emotions and heritage: what innovative qualitative and quantitative research methods are most effective for analyzing the role of emotion in heritage studies?

Applications:

- A short abstract (max. 250 words)
- A brief academic biography (including name, affiliation, research interests; max 100 words)

Applications for panels and roundtables:

- A short rationale of the aim of the panel (max. 250 words)
- An abstract of each paper to be presented (max. 250 words)
- A brief academic biography of all the presenters (including name, affiliation, research interests; max 100 words)

Proposals can be submitted by **15th March 2025** to ahmannualconference@gmail.com.

Organization Committee:

- Dr. Sophie Berrebi
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For more information, email: ahmannualconference@gmail.com

About the Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture (AHM)

The AHM fosters dynamic, interdisciplinary and transnational research on heritage and memory, it organizes PhD training, seminars, reading groups, workshops, public debates and international conferences, and it stimulates scholarly cooperation in an international setting. The school brings together researchers working in diverse areas and fields, interconnecting heritage and memory studies, cultural studies, museum studies, archaeology, material culture, art history, media, conservation and restoration, archival studies, digital humanities, postcolonial and performative

studies, religious studies, music and theatre studies, conflict and identity studies, Slavonic languages and cultures, Holocaust and genocide studies, European memory studies, Middle Eastern studies, and cultural, public and oral history. For more information about AHM please visit the [website](#).